

Motion Proposed By Councillor Adrian Abbs and Seconded By Councillor Lee Dillon at the Full Council meeting on the 18 January 2022

“Overview:-

Given the Council’s declaration of a climate emergency at a district wide level, it is a critical part of the delivery to have any body, company or individual contributing to carbon emissions join West Berkshire Council in achieving its stated goals of net zero by 2030.

Transport is amongst the largest contributors of carbon emissions and the taxi trade is one group over which West Berkshire Council has some direct influence.

During recent meetings with the trade body several key factors were established that have led directly to this motion and, should this motion be adopted, allow West Berkshire Council to encourage the whole trade in going greener at pace.

For the purposes of this motion “Taxis” refers to vehicles licenced for plying for hire on ranks or that can be hailed in the street and private hire vehicles which are vehicles licensed by the Council which must be pre-booked. “Licence fees” refers to those fees associated with Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences, plus Private Hire Operators (PHO) licences for both new vehicles / operators and renewal of licences.

Other direct benefits would also result from the adoption of this motion in and around taxi ranks where charging infrastructure is deployed.

- Street vendors that use car parks next to taxi ranks could use direct electricity feeds rather than the petrol and diesel generators currently used.
- Reductions in noise from all vehicle types and street vendors would result from the removal of fossil fuel engines.
- Improvements in Air Quality and specifically a reduction in Nitrous Oxide and fine particulate matter which would lead to a safer environment for all.

Council notes:

- 95% of Taxis are still diesel according to the latest survey of the trade.
- That 60% of those that recently responded to a consultation said they are considering changing their vehicle in the next 3 years.
- That 80% of the journeys made in a taxi are less than 50 miles.
- That 80% of taxi drivers drive less than 200 miles a day.
- That poor air quality (especially in built up areas) is a significant risk to health.
- That whilst 50% of respondents would consider electric for personal use, only 30% thought they might choose electric for work.
- That to meet our climate emergency declaration goals by 2030, significant changes in transport modes are needed as quickly as possible.
- That most battery electric vehicles suitable for use as a taxi have ranges of more than 200 miles.

- That full plug-in hybrids often have a range on pure electric exceeding the average journey needed by taxi.
- The upper end of the cost estimates for licences is £36K assuming all 60% of those thinking of a change do so in year 1.

In order to help achieve this:

This Council will introduce an incentive scheme to help all forms of vehicle licensed by West Berkshire for public transport to go green. The incentive scheme would run until the 31 March 2025 and would result in the Council subsidising licence fees over a three-year period for each taxi.

This scheme will introduce a zero-licence fee tariff for any taxi that is powered fully by electricity and a 50% reduction of the licence fee for any taxi that can do a minimum of 50 miles on electric power before switching to fossil fuel - known often as plug-in hybrids. The cost of this proposal for every 10% of fee take up would be a subsidy of:

- £6.5K fully electric
- £3.25K for hybrid

This Council commits to:

- Introducing the subsidised incentive scheme within next year's budget.
- Providing (where practical) fast charging points next to taxi ranks to remove
- Range anxiety for taxi drivers".